

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /073 W
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R 071241Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 370
NFO RUQMBE/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 6990
AMEMBASSY ANNAM
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMSSCUS
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 8310

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SA, EG
SUBJECT: SAUDI SUPPORT FOR SADAT

1. LOCAL PRESS DECEMBER 5 REPORTED THAT EGYPTIAN PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR ASHRAF MARWAN DELIVERED TO KING KHALID MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT SADAT ON DECEMBER 4. PICTURES OF KING AND MARWAN SHAKING HANDS WERE FEATURED ON FRONT PAGE OF SEVERAL PAPERS. CONTENTS OF MESSAGE WERE NOT REVEALED.

2. COMMENT: MARWAN MADE PREVIOUS TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA ON NOVEMBER 25 TO EXPLAIN TO CROWN PRINCE FAHD SADAT'S REASONS FOR GOING TO JERUSALEM AND TO ASK FOR SAUDI SUPPORT. THAT TRIP WAS NOT REPORTED IN SAUDI PRESS. TREATMENT OF CURRENT TRIP IN PRESS AND JOINT SAUDI-KUWAITI DIPLOMATIC MOVES LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT SAUDIS HAVE NOW DECIDED TO SUPPORT SADAT EFFORT TO EXTENT THEY CAN. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE QUOTE BELOW LAST THREE PARAGRAPHS OF EDITIRIAL WHICH APPEARED DECEMBER 5 IN ARAB NEWS. MANY POINTS MADE BY EDITORIAL
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WRITER APPEARED IN EDITORIALS IN ARABIC LANGUAGE PAPERS DECEMBER 5 BUT WERE LESS WELL ARTICULATED. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN TO WHOM EDITORIAL WRITER HAS BEEN TALKING IN SAG CIRCLES, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT FOR ONE REASON OR ANTOEHR HE HAS PIECED TOGETHER EXCELLENT ANALYSIS OF CURRENT SAG THINKING AS IT HAS EVOLVED OVER LAST THREE OF FOUR DAYS.

3. QUOTE: ONLY THE FUTURE WILL TELL IF THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT IS RIGHT. MEANWHILE, COUNTRIES LIKE SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT, WHO HAVE FOUND THEMSELVES ONCE MORE IN THE MIDDLE BETWEEN DISPUTING ARABS WILL HAVE TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE AND GOOD OFFICES TO AVOID A COMPLETE BREAK BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA. THIS IS A SPECIALLY TOUGH TASK BECAUSE FOR ONCE THE MEDIATORS ARE NOT CONVINCED OF THE MERITS OF ONE MAN'S POLICY AND ARE WARY OF THE OTHER'S.

4. QUOTE: SAUDI ARABIA HAS ALREADY SAID THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN CONSULTED ABOUT PRESIDENT SADAT'S VISIT AND THAT IF IT HAD IT WOULD HAVE COUNSELLED AGAINST IT. LUCKILY FOR THE ARABS, THIS COUNTRY HAS NOT BEEN CONSULTED. OTHERWISE IF PRESIDENT SADAT HAD GONE THROUGH WITH HIS PLANS DESPITE SAUDI ADVICE, THE KINGDOM WOULD HAVE BECOME PARTY TO THE INTER-ARAB CONFLICT AND LOST ITS PRECIOUS ROLE AS MEDIATOR. PERHAPS THIS SITUATION WAS AT THE BACK OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S MIND WHEN HE OPTED AGAINST LETTING THE SAUDIS IN ON HIS SECRET.

5. QUOTE SO SAUDI ARABIA FINDS ITSELF CAST AGAIN IN THE ROLE OF INTER-ARAB MEDIATOR. THE BASIC PREMISE IN ANY MEDIATION WILL HAVE TO BE THAT EGYPT MUST NOT BE LEFT ALONE. THERE ARE A THOUSAND AND ONE REASONS WHY EGYPT MUST BE TALKED TO AND NOT EXORCISED. BUT ONE IN ENOUGH: IF EGYPT IS BOYCOTTED BY THE OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT SADAT WILL BE WEAKENED IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND HE

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MAY BE FORCED OR ANGERED INTO A SEPARATE PEACE WITH ISRAEL, A SITUATION WHICH ALL THE ARABS WANT TO AVOID. WHEN CROWN PRINCE FAHD SPOKE ABOUT DIALOGUE AND UNITY OF RANKS THE OTHER DAY HE WAS ONLY REFLECTING THE WEIGHT OF THE PROBLEM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS. END QUOTE.

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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